

Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

VETERINARY SERVICE

25 March 2002

Dear Dr Stratmoen

FSIS ON-SITE AUDIT OF NORTHERN IRELAND 2001

Thank you for your letter dated 7 February 2002, with which you included a copy of the final draft report. I would wish to make the following comments on the points which you raise with regard to laboratory procedures.

No intra-laboratory check samples being performed for residue testing (hormones) at the Veterinary Sciences Division Laboratory, Stormont

I can confirm that the Chemical Surveillance Department, Veterinary Sciences Division Laboratory, Stormont, took immediate remedial action on this point and introduced a check sample programme into the hormone screening test.

Inadequate turnaround times for laboratory results for some residue compounds at the Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane

The Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane continues to endeavour to meet the turnaround times required by the USDA. The small numbers of samples analysed by the laboratory causes of scale and disproportionate costs associated with the quality assurance of the data. Further efforts will be made to address the issue.

Inadequate percentage of recoveries for chlorinated hydrocarbons at the Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane.

The percentage recoveries achieved at the Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane satisfies the requirements set out in document 7826/VI/97, "Quality Control Procedures for Pesticide Residues Analysis" (Guidelines for Residues Monitoring in the European Union). The methods and procedures at the laboratory are under constant internal review.

Inadequate procedures regarding corrective actions to be taken when analyst's performance does not meet expected standards at the Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane.

The Quality Manual for the Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane, section 4.6 covers the corrective action to be taken in the event of non-conforming work being identified. Dr Mitchell, Head of Unit, states that this section is necessarily general in wording since all eventualities can not be predicted. The quality document has satisfied the laboratory's two accreditation bodies.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Dundonald House, Upper Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 3SB

Telephone (028) 90

Fax (028) 90

Website: www.dardni.gov.uk

525012

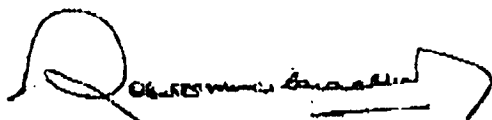
The standards books were inadequate and some standards had expired at the Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane.

The Food Chemistry Analytical Unit, Newforge Lane intends to introduce a bound standards book for new standards as they are obtained. Dr Mitchell, Head of Unit, has pointed out that some of the standards held would be difficult to replace as many are no longer commercially available. The laboratory's approach is to analyse standards chromatographically both qualitatively and quantitatively prior to use has been accepted by the laboratory's external accreditation bodies.

I trust that these comments help to clarify the points which your letter raised. Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact either me directly or my staff.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely



DR R M McCracken
Chief Veterinary Officer

Sally Stratmoen, Chief
United States Department of Agriculture
Food Safety & Inspection Service
Equivalence Section, International Policy Staff
Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation
WASHINGTON DC 20250